



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

26 APRIL 2022

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) Bakersfield – 20 Arrested in Human Trafficking, Child Exploitation Operation

(U) During a multi-agency investigation, authorities arrested 20 people and recovered five victims involved in a human trafficking and child exploitation operation in Bakersfield. Between 20 to 23 April, multiple agencies arrested three for trying to contact juveniles for lewd purposes via social media and dating apps. One of those arrested was a lieutenant with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Jose Donaciano Valdez allegedly tried to meet with a 13-year-old girl at a hotel for lewd purposes. An undercover officer posed as the underaged girl. Authorities also arrested six for trying to solicit sexual acts in exchange for cash and five alleged pimps.

SOURCE: 25 April 2022, [KGET](#)

(U) SOUTHWEST BORDER

(U) California – US Border Patrol Arrests Four for Smuggling Drugs, Cash

(U) San Diego – US Border Patrol agents arrested four US citizens suspected of attempting to smuggle drugs and cash into the country in two separate incidents over the weekend, authorities said Monday. The first incident occurred Saturday, when an agent sent a 2004 Dodge Durango to secondary inspection at the State Route 86 immigration checkpoint in El Centro, according to a news release from the El Centro sector of US Customs and Border Protection. A K-9 detection team alerted agents to a nightstand inside the vehicle with a false compartment used to conceal narcotics. The second incident occurred Sunday, when agents with dogs conducting anti-smuggling operations stopped a 2022 Honda Accord on Interstate 10 in Indio. The K-9 detection team discovered 13.5-pounds of fentanyl pills and 12.2-pounds of cocaine, with a total estimated street value of \$418,810 in a duffel bag concealed by a blanket, the release states.

SOURCE: 25 April 2022, [The San Diego Union Tribune](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) New York – Trial for Software Developer Accused of being Hezbollah Sleeper Agent

(U) New York – A New Jersey software developer was allegedly a 'sleeper agent' for an Islamic terrorist group and planned to carry out attacks on famous landmarks if Iran was bombed, prosecutors say. Alexei Saab, 45, of Morristown, NJ, worked for Hezbollah's Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO) from 2000 to 2005 as 'a terrorist and spy' scoping out potential terrorism targets in New York, Boston, Washington, DC and abroad, his trial heard Monday. Prosecutors allege by day Saab worked for technology companies as an engineer, keeping up appearances as a 'normal' American citizen. However, at night, he allegedly gathered intelligence information on national landmarks, tunnels and bridges, and photographed his potential targets. Saab has pleaded not guilty to charges including providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization, conspiracy, receiving military-type training from a foreign terrorist organization, unlawful procurement of citizenship to facilitate international terrorism, and citizenship application fraud.

SOURCE: 25 April 2022, [Daily Mail](#)

UNCLASSIFIED

(U) Massachusetts – Man Arrested for Making Threats to Webster’s Dictionary Over Gender Terms

(U) Springfield – A California man was arrested last week for allegedly threatening to bomb Merriam-Webster's offices and kill its employees over the dictionary publisher's definitions for women, federal prosecutors said. Jeremy David Hanson, 34, of Rossmoor, California, was charged last week with one count of interstate communication of threats to commit violence for alleged online threats that he sent to the company in October, according to the US Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts. Hanson allegedly sent the company several threatening messages through its "Contact us" section on its website and in the comments section on its webpages that corresponded to the word entries for "Girl" and "Woman," Rachael Rollins, the US Attorney for the District of Massachusetts said. Rollins said the threats were serious enough to force Merriam-Webster to close its Springfield and New York offices out of an abundance of caution.

SOURCE: 22 April 2022, [ABC News](#)

(U) South Carolina – Officer Killed Responding to Domestic Disturbance

(U) Cayce – A police K-9 officer in central South Carolina was shot and killed while responding to a domestic disturbance early Sunday, police said. Roy Andrew "Drew" Barr, 28, had just begun talking to a man outside the house when someone inside opened fire shortly before 3 a.m., said Chief Chris Cowan of the Cayce police department at a news conference. He said Barr was hit by one bullet. The man who shot Barr killed himself after a seven-hour standoff, said the South Carolina state police, which has been asked to investigate the shooting.

SOURCE: 25 April 2022, [Associated Press](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) Mali – Al-Qa’ida Linked Group Captures Russian Mercenary Fighters

(U) Bamako – Islamic extremist rebels in Mali linked to al-Qa’ida said they have captured mercenary fighters from Russia's Wagner Group in fighting earlier this month. It's the first time that Mali's extremist rebels known as JNIM have claimed to capture Russian fighters. The Wagner Group fighters were seized in the first week of April in the mountainous Segou region of central Mali, said the JNIM statement, which called the fighters "criminals." Since the beginning of the year, several European countries have denounced the presence of Wagner’s Russian mercenaries, estimated to be about 1,000, who fight alongside Malian soldiers. They have been blamed for killing about 300 civilians in the central town of Moura. They have also been blamed for staging burials of bodies near the Gossi military base and trying to blame French military forces for the graves.

SOURCE: 25 April 2022, [Associated Press](#)

(U) South Sudan – Dozens Killed in Violence

(U) Juba – Dozens of people have recently been killed in violence that includes beheadings and sexual attacks in a volatile county in South Sudan, the UN Mission in South Sudan said yesterday. The mission said it documented 72 civilian deaths between 17 February and 7 April in Unity State's Leer County. Among the victims was a local staffer with the humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders, it said. Sixty-four cases of sexual violence, including gang rapes, were recorded in Leer in the same period. The attacks were carried out by "armed youth" from the neighboring counties of Koch and Mayendit.

SOURCE: 25 April 2022, [Associated Press](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

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